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SENSITIVE
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FOR ACTION OF OIG, AF/W AND AF/EX

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: AMGT ASIG NI
SUBJECT: CORRECTION: MISSION NIGERIA OIG COMPLIANCE REPORT

Ref: a. Report of Inspection Embassy Abuja and Consulate General Lagos, Nigeria, Report Number ISP-I-08-25A, July 2008; b. OIG email of July 25, 2008

¶1. Below follows Mission Nigeria compliance report for Ref A Report of Inspection.

¶2. Recommendation 1: Embassy Abuja should follow National Security Decision Directive-38 guidelines to perform and document a comprehensive analysis of both programmatic and administrative requirements, including administrative support, security, office and residential space, and training cost issues prior to deciding on requests to increase personnel. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post agrees with this recommendation. Embassy Abuja has performed a thorough analysis of mission growth and support staff needs in both Abuja and Lagos. The results of this study revealed a deficit in all areas of ICASS service provision and highlighted several areas where staff augmentation was needed. A comprehensive package of new positions was developed and presented to the ICASS Council, where it was approved. Twenty-five new LES management support positions were created (9 in Lagos, 16 in Abuja) and efforts are currently underway to recruit and fill these new vacancies. Decisions on future NSDD-38 requests will be carefully analyzed in accordance with Mission support platforms.

¶3. Recommendation 3: Embassy Abuja should identify a suitable facility that can accommodate both a warehouse and maintenance shop, using the services of both a local real estate broker and a Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations real estate specialist, and vacate the existing facility as a matter of urgency. (Embassy Abuja, in coordination with OBO.)

Post agrees with this recommendation. In April 2008, post signed a multi-year lease on a new warehouse that will adequately accommodate current and long-term needs.

¶4. Recommendation 4: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Bureau of African Affairs, should rewrite the job description for position #20017002 and seek its re-grading at the FS-02 level. (Action: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with DGHR.)

Post agrees with this recommendation. The Human Resources Office in Abuja is collaborating with ConGen Lagos to revise the position description. Once this has been completed, it will be transmitted to AF/EX for further action. Post notes that AF has informed that this position will not be advertised in the 2009 bidding cycle.

¶5. Recommendation 5: Embassy Abuja should rewrite the work requirements of the information resource office in Abuja (#60104000) to indicate that he makes regular visits to the public affairs section in Lagos to review its Information Resource Center operations and provide continuing program and technical advice and consultations. (Action: Embassy Abuja)

Post concurs with this recommendation. The Country Public Affairs

Officer has prepared a draft work requirements statement for the incoming IRO (ETA September 2008) which specifies the above points. The outgoing IRO visited Lagos in April and July to assist and consult with the IRC.

¶6. Recommendation 6: Embassy Abuja should request Consulate General Lagos to return the Abuja fraud investigation cases still awaiting action and develop a six-month training plan that will enable Embassy Abuja to conduct Fraud investigations on Consulate General Lagos' behalf in its consular district. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Abuja began receiving transfers of all Abuja fraud investigation case files during an investigative visit from Consulate General Lagos staff in June 2008. Three cases remain to be remitted, and these will be transferred by the end of August 2008.

Embassy Abuja has developed a multi-tiered training plan for the new Consular Investigator to include section orientation, distance study, and practical field training from Lagos FPU staff under the supervision of the Abuja FPM. Since starting in June 2008, the FSN-I has completed four full online modules on visa processing and fraud prevention, and completed self study of all appropriate consular training SIGs. The Abuja Consular Investigator has accompanied the Lagos FPU staff on several fraud investigations during their final Abuja field tour, and drawing on her prior investigative experience and contacts, she has already conducted numerous solo fraud investigations and verifications in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, and is soon to accompany Lagos FPU on a series of training investigations in the Lagos Consular district. At the conclusion of this latter training, the Abuja Consular Investigator will begin processing all Lagos fraud cases requiring field investigation in Abuja.

¶7. Recommendation 7: Embassy Abuja should instruct Consulate General Lagos to develop both a fraud prevention unit travel plan that includes officers in some of the field investigations and a mechanism for spot checking other investigation results, and Embassy Abuja should follow suit. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post accepts this recommendation. FPU Lagos has drawn up a travel plan that includes officer travel and spot checks. Embassy Abuja will use this plan to draw up its own.

¶8. Recommendation 8: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should rewrite the position description of the Lagos deputy consular section chief to include primary responsibility for the American Citizen Services (ACS) unit. (Embassy Abuja, in coordination with CA.)

Post accepts this recommendation and has rewritten the position description to include ACS responsibility.

¶9. Recommendation 9: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of African Affairs, should eliminate one of the three consular associate positions at Consulate General Lagos and replace it with an additional consular assistant position, adjusting the funding source as appropriate. (Action: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with CA and AF.)

Post accepts this recommendation and is preparing a request to CA and AF.

¶10. Recommendation 11: Embassy Abuja should consult with Consulate General Lagos and the Bureau of Consular Affairs about requirements and fund a Q-matic system that can be installed at the same time as the reconstruction project or, if funds are not available, prepare a request to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations for procurement and funding as part of the renovation project. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post agrees with this recommendation. Preliminary research has been completed on Q-matic systems and ConGen Lagos is consulting with CA on funding. The Q-matic would be installed once the Consulate's rehabilitation project is completed.

¶11. Recommendation 13: Embassy Abuja should prepare and forward to the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations a mission-wide

maintenance plan with financial justification for a funding increase in the 7901 and 7902 accounts. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post agrees with this recommendation. The Financial Management Office is collaborating with the Facilities Maintenance Officers in Lagos and Abuja to develop a comprehensive, needs-based budget request for 7901 and 7902 funding. When complete, it will be transmitted to OBO.

¶12. Recommendation 14: Embassy Abuja should develop and implement appliance and furniture pools in order to minimize the need for warehouse space, as well as to achieve greater efficiency in managing inventories of nonexpendable U.S. Government property. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post agrees with this recommendation. As a Tier II post for State/USAID consolidation of management services, the formation of a joint furniture and appliance pool is under consideration by the Consolidation Committee. If there is sufficient interest by other serviced USG agencies to the point where they are willing to buy into this service, post will proceed with implementation.

¶13. Recommendation 15: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should develop a timetable and a list of resource requirements to implement all recommendations for Embassy Abuja and Consulate General Lagos warehouses from the 2007 visit of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations safety, health, and environmental specialist. (Action: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with OBO.)

Post agrees with this recommendation. With a projected date of occupancy for the new Abuja warehouse to be before the end of calendar year 2008, all of the hazards and weaknesses in Abuja in the 2007 SDEM report will be addressed (please see Recommendation 3). Consulate General Lagos has created a list of fourteen items that need to be bought or replaced for a total of \$77,000. The timeline for implementation will be transmitted to OBO/SDEM before the end of August 2008.

¶14. Recommendation 16: Embassy Abuja should conduct a mission-wide review of all position descriptions, revise those that are not accurate, and reclassify the affected positions under the computer assisted job evaluation process. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post agrees with the recommendation. The HR office has begun a mission-wide review of all Locally Employed Staff position descriptions to ensure they are current and accurately reflect the job content of the incumbent. With over 600 LES positions needing this review, it is expected that this process will take a minimum of six months.

¶16. Recommendation 17: Embassy Abuja should solicit and analyze various options for medical allowances and submit the results to the Bureau of Human Resources for consideration. (Action: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with DGHR.)

Post concurs with this recommendation. The Abuja HR office has requested of HR/OE information on medical coverage provided by comparatoQ in Qria. After we have reviewed what other employers are offering, we will work with HR/OE to adjust our current medical coverage if we are not keeping pace with local market conditions.

¶16. Recommendation 18: Embassy Abuja should develop and implement training plans for the telephone and radio technicians within the Mission. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post concurs with this recommendation and is working with RIMC Pretoria to find the appropriate technical classes for local IRM staff.

¶17. Recommendation 19: Embassy Abuja should immediately distribute encrypted radios to all emergency action committee members at Consulate General Lagos. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post concurs with this recommendation. All available DES-encrypted radios have been distributed to members of the Lagos EAC, and additional units have been ordered in order to provide one to each member and backfill our supply of spare units.

¶18. Recommendation 20: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should upgrade the bandwidth for Consulate General Lagos. (Action: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with OBO.)

Post concurs with this recommendation. The bandwidth for the circuit between Lagos and Abuja was upgraded from 448Mbps to 1024Mbps in July 2008.

¶19. Recommendation 21: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should immediately repair the fire alarm in the information program center's information processing facility at Consulate General Lagos. (Action: Embassy Abuja, in coordination with OBO.)

Post concurs with this recommendation. The IPC fire alarm was made operable in March 2008.

¶20. Recommendation 22: Embassy Abuja should establish and implement procedures that require travelers to submit their travel vouchers within the time frames established in the Financial Management Procedures Handbook. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post concurs with this recommendation. During the OIG site visit, the FMO office issued management notice 2008-039 on March 5, 2008, specifying the following:

Travel regulations, and the Debt Collection Act provide that: travel claims must be filed no more than 5 work-days after travel completion (7 work-days for post assignment travel) (4 FAH-3 H-465.1-1); advance balances, not offset by the amount claimed, are to be refunded within 10 days of notification by direct refund to the cashier (4 FAH-3 H-463.4-2 c.); if not settled within 30 calendar days after travel completion, charges for interest, administrative fees and penalties may be assessed beginning on day 31 (4 FAH-3 H-463.2-3 and 4 FAH-3 H-463.4-1c), wages may be offset to recoup amounts owed; additional travel will not be authorized nor travel advances issued until outstanding advances are refunded, and (4 FAH-3 H-463.1-5) lastly, all travel advances to a traveler must be repaid (by voucher and/or direct refund) before the traveler departs on transfer, separation, or home leave. (4 FAH-3 H-463.1-5)

¶21. Recommendation 23: Embassy Abuja should research and resolve all outstanding travel advances that have been pending more than 30 days. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post concurs with this recommendation and has aggressively enforced the travel regulations stated above and has strictly enforced the following policies:

Refusal of additional travel advances to any traveler who Q outstanding advances, and formal notification to employee and supervisor of outstanding advances. For away from post employees, the outstanding advance is referred to the DOS finance center for collection if payment or a voucher is not received after the 1st notification. For employees at post, 3 formal notifications are made to the employee prior to formally submitting to the DOS finance center for collection. For employees who terminated final severance payment is withheld prior to the settlement of the debt.

Following the above policies has allowed post to significantly reduce the number of outstanding travel advances.

¶22. Recommendation 24: Embassy Abuja should establish and implement procedures that require quarterly review of the suspense accounts and the allocation of suspense account items to the depositor or to the correct account. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post concurs with this recommendation. Post is drafting procedures for reviewing the suspense account on a quarterly basis.

¶23. Recommendation 25: Embassy Abuja should research and reconcile all transactions charged to the suspense account that have been outstanding for more than 90 days. (Action: Embassy Abuja.)

Post concurs with this recommendation and is in the middle of a

comprehensive review of the account with plans to complete its analysis with any required corresponding adjustments by 31 August 108. Once the comprehensive review is complete post will review the suspense account on a quarterly basis based on the fiscal year (Dec, Mar, June, Sept) to ensure all items are properly transferred to the correct account or returned to the customer if required.

124. Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Abuja should follow a near-term to medium-term strategy of maintaining the present number of American Corners and strengthening their partnership capacity.

Post concurs with this recommendation and is the process of conducting a comprehensive review of our American Corner Program. To date, this has led to the determination that our American Corners in three locations were adrift (no programming, no commitment on the part of the institutional partner). We have withdrawn our collections in two locations and are seeking more committed partners for these Corners. We are also considering whether to retain our American Corner collection in the third location. The incoming IRO's draft Work Requirement Statement has also been modified to call for the development and implementation of a strategic plan to strengthen and rationalize the American Corner program in Nigeria.

125. Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Abuja should review the fraud prevention units' caseload distribution a year after Abuja assumes full responsibility for investigations in its consular district to determine if a Lagos investigator position should be transferred to Abuja.

Post accepts this recommendation and has it under ongoing review.

126. Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Abuja should request the Lagos fraud analyst, in conjunction with the immigrant visa chief, to review pending adoption cases, track and analyze results, and reevaluate the practice of referring all such cases for field investigations.

Post accepts this recommendation and has completed action on it. We have reviewed our adoption investigation policy and now we are handling them on a case by case basis rather than the blanket investigation rule. To date, we have not changed the language in the adoption flyer so it remains a 100% investigation policy in our public information, but officers now use their discretion regarding investigations rather than sending EVERY case up. A training session was completed that included all officers and the FPU investigators so that we can pinpoint what the fraud indicators are and refer them to FPU on a case by case basis. We've been tracking adoptions more closely on the IV side of things and I know FPU has also been doing the same thing. There is a SOP drafted and awaiting clearance that spells this entire process out.

127. Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Abuja should include the reconstituting of a functional warden system in its Mission Strategic Plan and devote more of its representational and outreach efforts towards this goal.

Post concurs with this recommendation and incorporated it into the MSP. Lagos will seek CA and/or AF funding for the creation of a short-term, temporary Warden network coordinator position to liaison with resident American citizens in an effort to revamp and reorganize the moribund warden network.

128. Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Abuja should provide WebPASS training to mission personnel.

Post concurs with this recommendation. Now that the 3rd office spaces have been completed, Embassy Abuja has regained the use of its computer training room. WebPASS training classes will be scheduled as soon as the ISC office is back to full staffing.

129. Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Abuja should develop a comprehensive procurement plan.

Post concurs with this recommendation and has developed an embassy-wide procurement plans that captures the needs of all the ICASS-serviced agencies in Abuja. This will be our vehicle for all end-of-year acquisitions.

¶130. Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Abuja should issue an administrative notice reminding staff about the length of time and staff requirements involved in unclassified and secure procurements.

Post concurs with this recommendation. The procurement staff had been operating out of very cramped temporary quarters while their permanent offices on the 3rd floor were being fitted-out. Now that they have a suitable work environment, realistic procurement timelines are being developed that will also be incorporated in the section's ICASS performance standards. These will be promulgated in a mission management notice.

¶131. Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Abuja should provide customer service training to the procurement staff.

Post concurs with this recommendation. As part of our year-end spending plan, we are contracting for both supervisory and customer service training for key members of the management staff. The Procurement Section will very much be a part of this service improvement effort.

¶132. Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Abuja should redesign its procurement request form highlighting required fields of information.

Post concurs with this recommendation. The procurement request form is being redesigned.

¶133. Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Abuja should expand the procurement section's duties to include compliance with International Cooperative Administrative Support Services standard.

Post concurs with this recommendation. The Procurement Staff, and its American supervisor, will be mindful of its obligation to meet the service standards that it has had a hand in developing.

¶134. Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Abuja should develop procedures in coordination with other management sections in order to facilitate quicker procurement for goods and services.

Post concurs with this recommendation. To obviate the previous communications and coordination problems between the Financial Management and Procurement sections, regular biweekly meetings between the leadership of both sections have been established.

¶135. Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Abuja should assign additional drivers to the Ambassador and deputy chief of mission and keep overtime for drivers to acceptable levels prescribed in Department motor vehicle and safety guidelines.

Post concurs with this recommendation. A third driver has been introduced into the lineup that serves the COM, and replacement for the general motor pool is being recruited.

¶136. Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Abuja should prepare proper waivers and obtain justifications before proceeding with changing the vehicle fleet.

Post concurs with this recommendation. When it is time to procure vehicles, all necessary waivers will be obtained.

¶137. Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Abuja should develop and implement a plan with a timeline for the disposal of official vehicles.

Post concurs with this recommendation. Consulate Lagos is implementing a disposal plan that will take its vehicles out to sea and dispose of them after they have been drained of all fluid and other pollutants. Embassy Abuja is still looking for a vendor who can destroy its armored cars in a manner that is acceptable to DS.

¶138. Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Abuja should advertise in places other than just the Embassy and the consulate intranet and Internet.

Post does not agree with this recommendation. Using its current

methods of recruiting, post receives, at a minimum, 200 applications for entry-level positions. Positions classified at higher grades receive upwards of 500 individual applications, which results in the HR staff working weekends to sift through them.

I39. Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Abuja should establish and implement a mission-wide orientation program for all their newly hired locally employed staff employees.

Post concurs with this recommendation. A mission-wide orientation program for newly-hired LES staff is being developed.

I40. Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Abuja should encourage supervisors to submit award nominations and assist them in writing them if they so request it.

Post concurs with this recommendation. All sections heads have been reminded of their obligation to recognize and reward their better performing employees through the Interagency Awards Program. The HR office will be conducting workshops on the nominating process to assist them in this effort.

I41. Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Abuja should establish and encourage managers to fill out other types of recognitions for local staff employees.

Embassy Abuja does not agree with this recommendation. While it takes onboard Informal Recommendation 17 that it should have a more extensive and robust awards program, non-monetary awards are not be perceived in a favorable light by its LES staff.

I42. Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Abuja should prepare a checklist with timeliness about the hiring process for eligible family members.

Post concurs with this recommendation. The HR office has prepared a checklist with suggested timelines for use when hiring EFMs.

I43. Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Abuja should request from the post employment committee and keep in the files an explanation of the selection of an eligible family member.

Post concurs with this recommendation, but notes that there has often been only one candidate for many of Abuja's EFM vacancies. That said, when the PEC is next convened to review applications, it will be encouraged to document its findings and recommendations.

I44. Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Abuja should name a Federal Women's Program Manager.

Post concurs with this recommendation. A Federal Women's Program manager was identified in May, 2008.

I45. Informal Recommendation 22: Embassy Abuja should place Equal Employment Opportunity information on bulletin boards of all buildings.

Post concurs with this recommendation. EEO information has been broadly distributed and posted in conspicuous locations.

I46. Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Abuja should monitor compliance with International Cooperative Administrative Support Service standards and use the results as a management tool to improve customer service.

Post concurs with this recommendation. The results of the annual ICASS Customer Satisfaction Survey have been used in staff meetings to illustrate the gulf between standards and practices. Both American and LES supervisors have been made aware of their responsibility to meet the goals that they have established for their sections.

I47. Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Abuja should include compliance with International Cooperative Administrative Support Services standards as an element in performance evaluations.

Post concurs with this recommendation. Management Section supervisors have been directed to include ICASS standards in their

discussions when meeting with their staff. As all Position Descriptions are also being reviewed, and in some cases revised. This element is also being included during consultations with the rated employee.

¶48. Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Abuja should distribute National Security Decision Directive-38 guidance and train International Cooperative Administrative Support Services Council members on developing cost impacts for National Security Decision Directive-38 responses.

Post agrees with this recommendation. The US Mission in Nigeria just underwent a thorough needs assessment of its support staff. This review was performed at the direction of the COM and with the collaboration of the ICASS council, and it tangibly linked the need for support staff to grow at rates commensurate with that of Program

elements. The Mission Nigeria ICASS Council is now well versed in the cost impacts of NSDD-38 requests.

¶49. Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Abuja should establish procedures that include periodic monitoring of status of funds, obligations, and liquidation amounts.

Post concurs with informal recommendation 26. Shortly after the on-site testing was completed the mission conducted a comprehensive review of unliquidated obligations working closely with the DOS finance center removing obligations that were no longer valid. The mission plans to conduct comprehensive reviews on a quarterly basis.

¶50. Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Abuja should require the financial management and general services offices to schedule monthly meetings to determine the validity of unliquidated obligations.

Mission concurs with informal recommendation 27 and has scheduled standing monthly meetings between the GSO and FMO offices to discuss the status of funds and enhance the working relationship between the offices. In addition, the offices along with other management sections began meeting on a bi-weekly basis in preparation for fiscal year end closeout.

¶51. Informal Recommendation 28: Embassy Abuja should develop procedures to make certain that the financial management office provides program offices with the status of funds reports.

Mission concurs with informal recommendation 28 and has a policy of providing status of funds to program offices on a monthly basis and upon request. In addition, in conjunction with the IMO Office the mission has made access to COAST reports available to program managers to review the status of the allotments they manage. The FMO Office is currently in the planning stages of developing training on the COAST application, which it plans to offer in the upcoming months. Further, the office began placing budgets for representation, conference training, and field travel online (intranet) and plans to update these on a regular basis so managers have the available resources to oversee their respective programs.

¶52. Informal Recommendation 29: Embassy Abuja should conduct verifications of cash advances to subcashiers.

Mission concurs with informal recommendation 29 and has implemented policy refusing replenishment to subcashiers unless they have a current independent verification on file with the Embassy cashier. In addition, the Embassy cashier has established an annual audit plan to perform their own independent verifications of the subcashiers. The independent reviews by the cashier are currently on-going and will continue annually.

¶53. Informal Recommendation 30: Embassy Abuja should conduct cash verifications using an unpredictable pattern at varying times of the month.

Mission concurs with informal recommendation 30 and will make further efforts to vary the monthly cash verifications in an unpredictable pattern.

¶154. Informal Recommendation 31: Embassy Abuja should determine if the mission has current Nigerian Government approval to operate radio frequencies for the emergency and evacuation and emergency action committee networks. If they do not, they should obtain approval to operate the radio frequencies for the appropriate networks.

Post concurs with this recommendation and will contact the appropriate GON authorities to determine that status of radio networks.

¶155. Informal Recommendation 32: Embassy Abuja should update all position descriptions of locally employed staff under the information program center throughout the mission.

Post concurs with this recommendation and will update positions as part of the process described in para 14.

¶156. Informal Recommendation 33: Embassy Abuja should update the mission's cellular telephone policy to reflect the requirements of Department regulations and redistribute it throughout the mission.

Post concurs with this recommendation and is writing a new cellular phone policy.

¶157. Informal Recommendation 34: Embassy Abuja should develop a checklist of sponsor duties and responsibilities and monitor that duties are completed.

Post concurs with this recommendation and once the new CLOs are onboard, they will be requested to compose a checklist for sponsors to follow.

¶158. Informal Recommendation 35: Embassy Abuja should establish an advisory board in Lagos with officers who are single or childless to provide events ideas that appeal to them.

Post concurs with the recommendation. A new CLO has recently been hired in Lagos, and has been requested to take action on this recommendation.

¶159. Informal Recommendation 36: Embassy Abuja should maintain a file the disposal records of controlled medication.

Post concurs with this recommendation. Disposal records of controlled medications are now being maintained.

¶160. Informal Recommendation 37: Embassy Abuja should prepare a memorandum of understand with the regional psychiatrist based in Ghana to establish a schedule for recurrent consultations visits.

Post concurs with this recommendation, and has raised this issued with the Regional Medical Officer in Pretoria, who has referred it to M/MED, which will discuss with OIG.

PIASCIK